

10.22.08 - Latino Convention

Governor Deval L. Patrick
Latino Convention
October 22, 2008
As Delivered

Governor Deval Patrick:

This is your house. The State House is your house. And you have chosen, very appropriately, to gather in this particular hall. If you look up, there is a flag representing every one of 351 cities and towns here in the Commonwealth. And it's a wonderful reminder of the elements of our Commonwealth. But the truth is that we are stronger because of the coming together of those elements. The sum is greater than the - the whole is greater than the sum of its parts.

Unity is what makes the Commonwealth stronger, just as it is the theme for your gathering today. We have some very, very tough decisions in front of us and some tough times ahead of us. And in the budget decisions that we announced just last week, I will tell you that there were no happy choices, none. I have a whole mountain of correspondence from people saying, "Governor, I appreciate how tough the times are. I encourage you to step up and make the hard choices and I'm right behind you when you do, but don't cut my program." And if I were to add up all of those requests, then we could have cut just about nothing out of this budget. I understand that, because I understand that behind every one of those line items and every one of those decisions and every one of those dollars is a human being. Somebody's first chance, in some cases their only chance, somebody's job, someone's aspirations. But I told you when I ran for this office that I was running not just to have the job, but to do it. And in times like these, doing the job is tough, but it must be done. And I'm asking you- not that you agree with every decision, these are all difficult decisions and they touch you - but that you stick together.

The unity that is required of powered communities. And I mean that in the broadest terms - our membership in the Commonwealth is especially important now because there will be challenges facing not just state and city governments, but challenges facing your neighbors in your own homes; the ways you are worried about and dealing with paying the rent and the heat in the same month. There are all kinds of ways in which individuals, neighborhoods are facing the challenges of the times. And I believe that we must stick together and face them together.

In that spirit, I do want to assure you we intend to keep governing. Yes, there are some things that we may not be able to do as early, as quickly, or as thoroughly as we like; but we are not going to get into a bunker and stop governing. You can't create jobs from a bunker. You can't educate young people from a bunker. You can't provide for homelessness and the needs of vulnerable people with the resources we do have from a bunker.

We must keep governing. And we intend to do just that. And even as we do, I ask you to act as if you understand what it means to be a member of a community. Simple things - look in on your elderly neighbors when it gets cold and make sure the heat and the electricity is on. If you've got some extra canned goods, take them to a food bank. If you've got some extra clothes, take them to a shelter.

Remember that being a member of a community is not an intellectual exercise. It's not just about rhetoric. It's about how we behave. And that cannot be the responsibility of government alone. That must be your responsibility. So just as you're admonished today to understand on the political level, you have right now all the power you need to make political change, and you are urged by everyone who will come to this podium today including me, to use that power. I ask you also to remember that you have all the power and opportunity that you gave to act like a member of a health community. We will get through this. And let's all be stronger when we come out the other side.